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Thomas A. Cole

# NARRATIVE

OF THE

741

RISE AND FALL

OF THE

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF OHIO.

Thomas W. Coleseott.

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BY

DANIEL DRAKE, M. D.

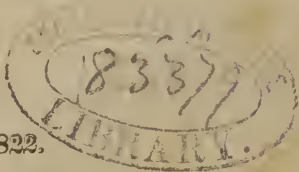
LATE PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTION.

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Cincinnati, Ohio, 1822.

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Looker & Reynolds, Printers.



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1892-1893



*For Dr. Ferguson  
from his friend  
The Author*

DEDICATION.

TO  
THE HONORABLE  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE  
OF OHIO,

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF TRANSACTIONS

IN THEIR

MEDICAL COLLEGE,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR MOST OBEDIENT

AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

15742 093  
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- I. Chronological statement of Events.
- II. Peculiarities in the Organization of the College.
- III. Of the Aid afforded by the State.
- IV. Of the Assistance afforded by the people of Cincinnati, with an account of the conduct of some of its Doctors.
- V. Of the Reasons given for the expulsion of the President.
- VI. Of the true causes of the expulsion, with portraits of those concerned in it.
- VII. Conclusion.



## PREFACE.

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THE following narrative relates chiefly to the writer himself. Those critics, therefore, who may intend to rest their strictures upon the perpetual recurrence of the personal pronoun, may save themselves the trouble of a perusal, and, on the word of the author, denounce it as an effusion of egotism. Aiming throughout to be true to his object, he has spoken of himself, at the time and in the manner which the occasion seemed to require: undoubtedly, with the partiality which a man is apt to feel for himself, when conscious of being in the right; but always, he trusts, with the veracity of an historian. He has attributed to his opponents no motives that he does not believe to have governed them; nor made any statements of importance, which he is not prepared to substantiate with documents, when they shall be denied by those who are implicated.

He has not written for the inhabitants of Cincinnati, merely—who are in general already acquainted with the events of which he treats; but for the people of the State—to whom, from the interest they have manifested towards the MEDICAL COLLEGE, it is due to give a statement of the causes, which have reduced it from five to two professors;—

and for the Western public, at large,—to whom it is equally due, to be made acquainted with the character of the remaining incumbents.

He was, in truth, reluctant to write at all; and has therefore suffered nearly two months to elapse, from the close of the drama which he describes, in hopes of being able to produce a state of things, that would render a resort to the press unnecessary for the vindication of his character. Whether by this resort he will be found to have accomplished the object in view, remains to be seen. He cannot but be sensible, that the very means of defence which he has been compelled to employ, may possibly stir up the wrath of his standing enemies; but at this late period, he is not to be deterred or startled by such an apprehension. He has followed as the subject led; and will rest satisfied, if in giving the history of a corrupt and complicated transaction, he shall be found to have said nothing to forfeit the respect of his friends, or the confidence of the public.

*Cincinnati, Ohio, May 1st, 1822.*

# A NARRATIVE.

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## I. CHRONOLOGICAL STATEMENT.

IN the month of December 1818, I made a personal application to the General Assembly of Ohio, and obtained the passage of a law authorising the establishment of a Medical College in Cincinnati. Four Professors were appointed; and these, with their associates and successors, were made the body corporate; and of course invested with the powers that are usually conferred upon trustees or regents—in other words, they were made their own governors.

From causes already known to the community, but two of these professors—Mr. Slack and myself—entered upon their duties; and this was not done till a year after the law was obtained. One of the first acts under the charter, was the election of Dr. BENJAMIN S. BOHRER, of the District of Columbia, who had the year before made application for the chair of *Materia Medica*. This was in January 1820. In the following summer, Dr. JESSE SMITH, of New-Hampshire, was appointed to the chairs of Anatomy and Surgery, and Mr. ROBERT BEST, the Curator of the Western Museum, chosen assistant to Mr. SLACK, the professor of Chemistry;—on account of that gentleman's engagements as President, and Professor of Mathematics, Mechanical Philosophy, Chemistry and Mineralogy, in the Cincinnati College; Lecturer on Natural Science in the Museum; and one of the

Pastors of a religious society in Kentucky. The different appointments in the Medical College were made by that gentleman and myself, and immediately notified to the Western students of medicine by an official Circular. To this I added, on my own responsibility, another, containing copies of the recommendatory letters, and a statement of the pretensions of my new colleagues.

The first of November arrived, and we made up a class of 24 pupils. Having, by the legislature, been appointed President of the Institution, *until the Faculty should choose to hold an election*, I delivered, at the opening of the session, an Inaugural Discourse on the importance of Medical Schools; on the fitness of Cincinnati for such an institution; and on the arrangements which had been made, or were in train, for the benefit of the students who might visit us. This discourse I had printed; and in the month of December proceeded with it to Columbus, in order to petition the General Assembly, then in session, for an appropriation of money to erect a hospital. With a liberality honorable to the state, they granted for this object, \$10,000; which although in depreciated bank paper, was quite adequate to the end in view.

In the month of April following, the first public Commencement in the institution was held, and degrees conferred on seven candidates. Immediately afterwards, arrangements were made for the ensuing session, and the outlines of a circular similar to that of the last year fixed on, with the omission of Mr. Best as the assistant of Mr. Slack, who objected to his reappointment; and the addition of *Clinical Medicine* and *Botany* to Dr. Bohrer's other professorship, according to his request. Soon afterwards he set off for the District of Columbia, and did not return till October. In this month accord-

ing to a conditional arrangement previously made, the professorships of Anatomy and Surgery were separated. Dr. Smith kept the former, and Dr. John D. Godman, of Philadelphia, was elected to the latter.

The second session opened with a class of 30 pupils; and, at its close on the 4th of March, degrees were again conferred on the same number of candidates as before. At the private examination of these pupils, as well as on the public Commencement, Dr. John Edmiston, of Chilliscothe, and Dr. Joseph Canby, of Lebanon, who under the law regulating the practice of physic had been appointed by the *Medical Convention* as Visitors to the College, were present.

Two days before the Commencement, at a meeting of the Faculty holden to give to the Visitors the information which would be necessary in the construction of their report to the Legislature, Drs. Smith, Bohrer and Slack, uttered many oracular sayings concerning the state and prospects of the institution, from which it appeared that they were displeased with me. I requested them to state particulars, but they declined doing so, as that would be personal—at the same time insinuating, that these very particulars must work out the ruin of the College. By perseverance I succeeded, however, in extracting from the gentlemen a number of complaints, which I rebutted in such a manner as to extort from *them* expressions of satisfaction; and draw from the *Visitors* repeated congratulations on so gratifying a result. The meeting indeed adjourned with an appearance of entire reconciliation.

Previously to this, from disgust at the course pursued by those gentlemen, Dr. Godman had sent in his resignation, to take effect at the close of the Commencement

day. On that occasion, after my duties as president of the institution were performed, I availed myself of the opportunity afforded by a respectable assemblage of citizens, to advert to the difficulties of the institution—to remind them of the benefits which it might be made to confer upon them—of the little that society had hitherto done for it—and of the necessity, under its existing external and internal troubles, of their interposition,—concluding with the proposal that they should appoint a committee of investigation. This was accordingly done. The committee had an interview with the Visitors, but not with the Faculty, in consequence of the decided opposition to such a meeting by Messrs. Bohrer, Smith and Slack. On the succeeding Thursday, the committee called a meeting of the citizens, and made a report which was suffered to lie on the table, and they were discharged from further enquiry. A new committee of twelve gentlemen was then chosen, with instructions to offer to the professors in the College their mediation; and to enquire into the wants and difficulties of the institution. On the morning of this day, Dr. Bohrer resigned; and the Faculty were then reduced to Dr. Smith, Mr. Slack and myself. Immediately after the committee was appointed, two of its members waited upon each of us, and upon those who had resigned, to say that they would meet the next morning, and to invite the whole to attend personally, or make written communications to them.—Messrs. Smith and Slack informed this sub-committee that *they* meant, before they slept, to expel me and let the investigations be made afterwards. At 8 o'clock we met according to a previous adjournment, and transacted some financial business. A profound silence ensued, our dim taper shed a blue light over the lurid faces of

the plotters, and every thing seemed ominous of an approaching revolution. On trying occasions, Dr. Smith is said to be subject to a disease not unlike Saint Vitus' Dance; and on this he did not wholly escape. Wan and trembling he raised himself (with the exception of his eyes) and in lugubrious accents said, "Mr. President—In the resolution I am about to offer, I am influenced by no *private feelings*, but solely by a reference to the public good." He then read as follows: "Voted that Daniel Drake, M. D. be dismissed from the Medical College of Ohio." The portentous stillness recurred, and was not interrupted till I reminded the gentlemen of their designs. Mr. Slack, who is blessed with stronger nerves than his master, then rose, and adjusting himself to a firmer balance, put on a proper sanctimony, and bewailingly ejaculated, "I second the motion." The crisis had now manifestly come; and learning by enquiry that the gentlemen were ready to meet it, I put the question, which carried, in the classical language of Dr. Smith, "*nemo contradiscente*." I could not do more than tender them a vote of thanks, nor less than withdraw, and performing both, the Doctor politely lit me down stairs. "*with a half broken Fellowship*"

Dr. Smith immediately elected Mr. Slack Registrar; and Mr. Slack in turn elected the Doctor President pro tempore. They organized themselves into a Faculty; proposed Dr. Bohrer for my professorship, and then nominated twelve gentlemen, whom they dubbed "Councilors;" not, however, as the event has shown, to advise them what course to pursue, but to counsel them on the best mode of reconciling an insulted community to that which they had adopted.



At the contemplated meeting of the Committee of Citizens, Dr. Godman and myself attended personally ; and I read a communication on the difficulties of the institution, and in vindication of my own conduct, supported by numerous documents. Dr. Bohrer did not appear personally, nor write to the committee. Messrs. Smith and Slack also failed to attend ; but each made a short communication, in which he stated, that they had expelled me to promote the public good, and proposed that the Committee should sanction the appointment of Dr. Bohrer to my place. They also solicited, that the Committee would concur with their "Councillors," and it was asserted by several members, that they had pledged themselves to re-organize the school on any plan, that might be agreed upon by those two bodies. The Committee contemplated, as a preliminary measure, to recommend my reinstatement ; and anxious, as the community had at last turned its attention to the institution, that they should re-organize it on their own plan, I formed and expressed the determination, that when reinstated, I would immediately resign ; and afterwards come into the school with the other professors who had left it, under such new and general arrangements as the Society might prescribe. I was reinstated, and resigned, to await the result of the inquiries and deliberations of the committee. These were continued for several days, and the citizens were then convened. The meeting was numerous and respectable ; and the Committee reported a recommendation that each of the professors, out of the school, should be reinstated in his late professorship ; and that a new committee should be appointed to solicit from the citizens at large, the means of erecting a public edifice for the institution, when it should be thus re-organized.

The "Councillors" also sent in a similar recommendation as to the professors, and both were unanimously adopted. A collecting committee was then appointed, and the meeting adjourned.

Immediately afterwards, equally regardless of their pledge, of the vote of the community, and of the recommendation of their own "Councillors," Messrs. Smith and Slack, in a meeting of those very "Councillors" refused to restore me to my professorship. At this or a preceding meeting, Dr. Bohrer attended, and gave the "Councillors" to understand, that he had discovered me to be better qualified for the chair of *Materia Medica*, which he held, than himself; as I understood Botany and Natural History, of which he had found out he was ignorant. But that he felt himself admirably qualified for the Institutes and Practice of Medicine, on which I had been lecturing. Apprehending that it might seem strange to them, that a man who could not do a small thing, was qualified to execute a larger of the same kind, he took great pains to convince them, that it *could not be otherwise*, which according to Euclid is one of the strongest species of demonstration. He said that he was not, however, a candidate for the place, though he would not return to the school without it; and concluded by informing them, that he could not give a promise to accept it, because he had declared, that he intended not to decide on his return to Cincinnati, till he reached the District of Columbia, and that he must be consistent; but that in giving *this* as the reason for delay, they could without difficulty infer what would be his decision. In this trying state of things, the "Councillors" did not wholly disappoint the expectations under which they had been selected. They would have preferred that Messrs.

Smith and Slack had done as they were advised, but as they had not, a resolution was passed, with six votes, advising them to do as they *pleased*; which resolution, out of respect to the *authority* from whence it emanated, they promptly carried into effect.

On the ensuing day, Dr. Godman was re-appointed, but as the plan of the citizens had not been executed, he refused to accept.

Messrs. Smith and Slack, now issued a newspaper circular, which, with an exemplary contempt for truth, they stated to be by the "consent and advice" of the 'Councillors;' and the former gentleman departed with Dr. Bohrer for the eastern states. The latter gentleman, it appears, has determined not to revisit the west; but the former has *so great a taste for intrigue, and such a constitutional obstinacy in evil*, that he may be expected to return instinctively to his *wallowings*.

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## II. PECULIARITIES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLEGE.

In the preceding section I have given a rapid sketch of the revolutions in this institution. To develope their causes will be a more difficult task, and can only be accomplished by successive efforts. As a preliminary measure, I shall speak of the peculiarities in its organization.

In general, establishments of literature and science are planned and erected by the union of a number of patriotic individuals; or by spontaneous legislative en-

actment and patronage. Of this kind is the Cincinnati College, which owes its existence to the labours and honorable munificence of a number of citizens ; but the project of establishing a medical school originated with myself. Neither the people of the city, nor the members of the legislature, had suggested or desired it. The former, with a few exceptions, were inattentive and indifferent to the enterprize ; and the latter had nothing to give but corporate powers, which they bestowed, however, with promptness and liberality. Believing that the professors must rely for success exclusively upon their own efforts, it was thought they could act with more efficiency, if the grants of power were made directly to themselves, and this, as already intimated, was accordingly done.

In consequence of such an origin, and of the limited number of persons engaged in the undertaking, a large portion of the community seemed for some time to have regarded it in the light of a private speculation ; while those of better views, supposed it might be safely trusted to the enterprize in which it originated. To this apathy on the part of society, nearly all the disasters of the College may be finally traced up, as will appear in the course of the subsequent sections.

Another peculiarity of the institution related to the presidency. Being an independent college, and not a department of a university—some one of the professors must be the president. He was to be elected for two years, and every professor was eligible. As the CHAIR, however, was not so large as to receive the whole of us at the same time, this feature of our organization proved decidedly objectionable.

Another point in which this school differed from most others in the United States, was in having but five professors, instead of six or seven ; and in having a session of five months ;—which would enable that number to teach what six usually teach in four months. By this regulation, and by choosing a professor of Chemistry that was not a practitioner of medicine, I hoped to prevent the fatal competition in business, that might otherwise ensue from introducing, upon so small a theatre, five or six candidates for private practice. This arrangement, however, although strictly conformable to the principle that would lead an engineer to adapt his fortifications to the ground to be defended, and not undertake to fashion it to them ; and which met the decided approbation of the pupils generally, was made the pretext for complaint.

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### III. OF THE AID AFFORDED BY THE STATE.

This consists of two items—1st. The grant of powers, or the charter, under which the institution was organized, and of which I have just spoken. 2d. The appropriation of a sum of money for the erection in Cincinnati, of the “Commercial Hospital and Lunatic Asylum of Ohio,” into which the boatmen and lunatics of the state were to be admitted. Of this infirmary the professors were to be *ex officio* the medical attendants ; and in turn to have the privilege of introducing the pupils of the college.

From causes, beyond the controul of those to whom the erection of the edifice was confided, it has not been commenced; and the donation of the legislature has thus yielded no assistance to the medical institution. It is correct in point of fact, therefore, to say, that the school has received nothing from the state but corporate powers. This has arisen from want of means rather than inclination; but the effects on the institution are the same, from whatever cause the failure of endowment may have sprung.

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#### IV. OF THE ASSISTANCE AFFORDED BY THE PEOPLE OF CINCINNATI, AND OF THE CONDUCT OF SOME OF ITS DOCTORS.

A majority of the people of Cincinnati are emigrants from every civilized country, and did not come hither so much to cultivate literature, as commerce—to erect scientific, as manufacturing establishments.—Their emigration, moreover, was neither in colonies, nor in concert; and hence they arrived strangers to each other, in a strange land, without a more specific common object, than the pursuit of fortune and happiness. In such a population, although the individuals, like those of Cincinnati may be highly estimable, there can be but little devotion to literary and scientific projects; and still less of that active and harmonious effort, by which



alone they can be reared and sustained. It is not surprising, therefore, that the obvious importance of a medical school to the city, should have been generally overlooked; and that till lately very few of our citizens should have manifested a more active interest in its success, than to give it a passing benediction.

From this prevailing indifference has sprung its most overwhelming troubles; for while the people of Lexington gave munificently to a rival institution, those of Cincinnati contributed nothing to this; and while public indignation at that place would have fallen upon the most distinguished man in society if he had traduced either the school or the humblest of its professors, public unconcern, in this city, has tolerated the sneers of the most insignificant; and encouraged an opposition which in a well organized society would have been promptly and indignantly subdued. This opposition, which began to show itself soon after the school was projected, originated with a part of our practitioners of medicine, and had for its object the destruction of the whole scheme. Their motives could not be mistaken. A successful medical school would increase the number of scientific competitors in the city; and also raise the standard of excellence in the profession, to a degree which their natural dulness and confirmed indolence in study, would find unattainable. The project must therefore be destroyed; but to *declare war against it*, might incense the community:—it was as yet a mere project, and would sink if the projector should be overthrown. Thus originated the hostilities in which I have been so deplorably involved for the last three years. I might have ended them at any time, by abandoning the enterprise; and thus established an enviable reputation



for humility and contemptibleness ; instead of being denounced as ambitious, militant, and outrageously persevering ; but from an unaccountable obstinacy I selected the latter.

In the course of this protracted combat, my character was assailed, both openly and covertly, with every missile which these gentlemen had the ingenuity to invent or the desperation to wield. The vain-glorious and indiscreet ventured into the newspapers; the more cautious and timid thought it safer to animate the flighty combatants, and infuse poison into the minds of the community by private conversations. Between the two orders of assailants the magazines of billingsgate were emptied ; and the quivers of calumny exhausted of all their arrows. In the community this war of words excited the indignation of the few ; but the many found nothing in it save diversion ; and when a repetition of the same sounds began to pall upon their ears, they expressed themselves "tired of the doctors' quarrels", and hoped they would soon be at an end. It was the smaller number only, who took the trouble to ascertain that from the first I had acted on the defensive; who perceived the aim and effect of these continued aggressions ; who had the experience to foresee that it might prevent the establishment of a medical school in Cincinnati—the public spirit to deplore that so useful a project should be wantonly destroyed—or the justice to defend its projector from the fire of the enemy, while labouring to fix its foundations. This, however, was at length accomplished. Two professors were obtained from the East, and lectures commenced.

The plan of operations was now modified, and to "*Divide and Conquer*" was adopted as the motto of the *Corps*.

They became devoted friends of the institution, but remained enemies of mine for establishing it among them. Anonymous letters were sent to the emigrant professors, with old newspaper essays, to warn them against confiding in me; and to apprize them that my popularity was so limited, that they might take with me whatever liberties their own interests should require, without the risk of censure or reprehension from society. The effects of this new manœuvre were ultimately even greater than they could have hoped; but I shall not trace them out at this moment.

It was in the succeeding winter that I made a visit of a month to Columbus, and obtained the hospital law. This unexpected acquisition, which seemed to threaten the extinction of their best hopes, like a new stimulus revived their jaded energies. The Doctor was laid aside for the Political economist; and the community were favored with receipts for supporting the poor, from the same mouths that had dictated nostrums for their cure. To every political reform there will be opposers, who are respectable and candid men, but wish to see the experiment first made elsewhere. The hospital law had opponents of this kind; but these made a small proportion only of those who were arrayed against it. All who had attached themselves to the fortunes of these medical gentlemen, or received the instillations of their poison,—and believed, as many did, that I had schemes inimical to the welfare of society,—together with our demagogues, standing oppositionists, and habitual carpers, united in opposing the acceptance of the donation, and in denouncing him who had petitioned for it. The good sense and honorable feeling of the city were at length, however, awakened; and, as it became obvious, that independently of the

Medical College, it would be for the common good to receive the appropriation, it was at last accepted by a vote of seven twelfths of the people.

During these discussions, several intelligent and patriotic gentlemen attempted to open the eyes of the community, to the value of the Medical School; and it cannot be denied that something was accomplished. The excitement, however, was transient; and abated without producing any important results. The majority soon became absorbed in their private concerns; and the enemies of the institution were left to pursue their wonted designs, without the fear of censure from the public.

By this time they had succeeded in suborning professor Smith to their views. The 'cuteness of that gentleman led him to perceive, that if he should array himself against me, he would be rewarded by their patronage; that they would certify to the community in his favor, and call upon him in consultations. This prospect was too ravishing to be resisted; and an alliance, offensive and defensive, was established. The first fruits of this new order of things was a compact, under the name of the Cincinnati Medical Association—the constitution and character of which are too notorious to need an extended commentary. It will suffice to say, that the ostensible object of the combination was to establish a system of medical ethics and police;—which would prohibit a member of the Association from consulting with a physician who was not;—that should forbid him from visiting his clergyman oftener than the case required;—which would prevent his gratuitously furnishing a brother doctor when ill with the requisite medicines;—which should punish him for reducing his charges more than one third below the common “fee bill,” although, as members expounded, he

might, after this deduction, give credit on his ledger for any additional amount, and finally receive what his patient was able to pay;—which should discourage theoretical debates in consultation--thereby precluding any genius from rising above the mean heat of the compact; and finally, that should punish him for a black catalogue of “*undefinable offences*.” The members pledged themselves on their word of honor to observe the regulations of which I have given a specimen; and all violations, so barefaced as to require notice, or so awkwardly committed as not to be excused by a quibble, were to be tried in a court of honor. The society was intended to embrace all the practitioners who would join it, and those who might not were to be denounced. Upon myself the operation was expected to be not much unlike that of the ordeal to which the witches of olden times were subjected. If I refused to join, I was to be separated from my colleagues in the school; and declared to be at length shown to be a man who could not associate and harmonize with any body—if I joined, I was to be tried for undefinable offences, by deadly enemies, who had laid the snare in which I was to be entrapped. I chose the former, stood aloof from the collusion, and was sustained in the determination, not only by several of my medical brethren, but by society at large. As might have been expected, the combination was soon agitated to its inmost elements, and crumbled away.

A spirit of revenge now sprang up, and cemented those who could not be bound together by written laws. The visible ties were dissolved, but the parties had sworn allegiance to each other, and adherence to the common object; and rallying more closely to the banner of the new commander, they determined in future to rely exclu-

sively on sapping and mining. Under a chief so admirably qualified to direct this kind of warfare they could scarcely fail of success. Two of my other colleagues were not long after corrupted, and a third resigned in disgust at the course which they had pursued.

The public mind was now supposed to be *thoroughly* poisoned by the insinuations of Dr. Smith and his associates; and the vigilance of my personal friends sufficiently deadened by the address of Dr. Bohrer:—The moment of golden opportunity seemed indeed to have arrived; and by the votes of Drs. Smith and Slack, acting with the privity of their medical friends, I was expelled from the institution.

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## V. OF THE REASONS GIVEN FOR THIS EXPULSION.

These, as far as I have been able to collect them, are referable to the following heads.

1. That I was disliked by certain physicians of the city; who would continue their opposition to the school, as long as I remained in it.
2. That I was unpopular with the people of Cincinnati; who were willing to endow the institution, but would not while I belonged to it.
3. That I had been wanting in due support to the other professors.

1. To the first I plead guilty. That several physicians of the city have determined never to forgive me, for persevering in the establishment of the school, in despite of their opposition, is a matter of equal notoriety with the fact, that these gentlemen are unknown beyond the precincts of the city—that not one of them has a private pupil—and that the patronage they were willing or able to afford under any circumstances was wholly ideal.

2. For the proofs, that my want of popularity was chiefly among these medical gentlemen and their retainers; I need only refer to the vote of the public meeting of the citizens, and to the indignation expressed in private circles on the event of my expulsion.

3. To the third class of complaints I plead not guilty. That I successfully vindicated myself from these charges before the Visitors from the Medical Convention; and subsequently to the committee of citizens I have already stated. So far indeed from having been deficient in due respect and support to my colleagues, I shall have no difficulty in shewing that my efforts in their favour were of the most liberal character.

1. Before their arrival, as already stated, I published all the important letters of recommendation which had been transmitted to me by those gentlemen and their friends; thereby introducing them to the community in the most favourable manner.

2. In a memorial to the Medical Convention, June 1821, requesting them to petition the Legislature in favour of the College, I observe, "*In the course of the year 1820, I was so fortunate as to obtain the co-operation of two gentlemen who are eminently qualified for their respective professorships.*"



5. In a memorial to the last general assembly, December 1821, I employed the following expressions—“ *If the aids essential to the success of the institution should not be obtained, the colleagues of your petitioner,—a majority of whom have come from a distance expressly to accept professorships in the college, and are gentlemen eminently qualified for their respective stations,—might find themselves under the necessity of returning home, the effect of which would be to destroy the institution.*”

4. At the late public Commencement, in an address to the citizens already referred to, I held the following language—“ *It is known to you that three of the professors are gentlemen who emigrated from a distance expressly to engage in this undertaking. They came not as exiles or adventurers of desperate fortune; but were preferred to many others. They have performed the duties for which they came, and by their colleagues, their pupils, and society at large, have been pronounced amply qualified for their respective stations.*”

5. During the winter of 1817—18, I delivered a course of lectures on materia medica in Transylvania University. Part of them were from notes, the remainder were written. When Dr. Bohrer arrived in Cincinnati, having heard him say that his course was still to prepare, I selected about twenty of these lectures and sent them to him, with permission to use them as he should see proper. Whether he ever opened them is of no consequence to me, or to the present purpose. The fact was of course known only to ourselves; but it is an act of justice to myself to state it on this occasion, as Dr. Bohrer is one of those who disseminated the rumor that I was wanting in liberality to my colleagues.



6. For the respectful terms in which I have invariably spoken of my colleagues to the pupils during both sessions of our school, I refer to them wherever they may be dispersed.

7. That in private conversations, I have made many vigorous efforts to inspire the community with confidence in their professional skill; and to disseminate the sentiment that it was a duty to employ them, is in Cincinnati a matter of notoriety.

To adduce additional proofs against unsupported accusations would be derogatory; and I shall therefore leave this part of the subject, with the general observation, that the *reasons* given by those gentlemen for my expulsion were only *pretexts* or *excuses* for their conduct.

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## VI. OF THE TRUE CAUSES OF THE EXPULSION; WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THOSE CONCERNED IN IT.

The real objects which the gentlemen proposed to themselves in my expulsion, were, 1st. To drive me from Cincinnati and succeed to my professional business: 2. To re-organize the school in such manner as would give it a new aspect, and dissolve, in the public mind, a connexion which it had with my name, so intimate as to be painful to them. The former would feed their avarice, the latter their vanity. Each member of the combination, moreover, had additional and subordinate motives,

and each had a part to perform somewhat different from the other, I shall therefore consider them separately, beginning with

*Doctor Smith.*

In addition to the two common objects stated above, this gentleman had two specific purposes : 1st. To punish me for not joining the Cincinnati Medical Association, and 2d. To gratify and animate the medical men who had made him their chieftain, by a sacrifice, the incense of which would be to them such a sweet smelling savour.

Either of these four objects would have been with *him* a sufficient motive for an immolation, that could do no other harm, at most, than destroy an unoffending man : the union of them became irresistible, and might even have agitated a heart *somewhat* fortified by the principles of virtue and honour.

To accomplish his ends without subjecting himself to the odium of voting for my expulsion, had been with him a *desideratum*. It had for some time, therefore, been his *policy*, to let the institution sink that I might leave it ; after which it might be resuscitated under his own auspices.

Of the evidences of this design I will trouble the reader with a few.

1. In the spring of 1821, when the trustees of the Hospital fund made a calculation of the expense of their projected building, they found that the appropriation of the state would enable them to erect an edifice large enough to accomodate the Medical College with apartments, and liberally proposed to do so. *At that time* Dr. Smith, as well as Dr. Bohrer and Mr. Slack, approved of the union, and the first of these gentlemen drew one of the plans for the intended building.

In a few weeks, however, he became the opponent of the scheme and opposed a connexion which promised so fairly to render the school permanent. An account of this change I communicated to Dr. Bohrer, then in the District of Columbia, and his answer now before me, contains a severe reprehension of Dr. Smith, for thus arraying himself against the obvious interests of the institution. Soon after his return, however, the Doctor initiated him into the mysteries of the plot, and he became a most decided opposer of the union.

2. In the summer of the same year, several citizens presumed to question the utility and objects of the Cincinnati Medical Association. Dr. Smith, at length attempted to defend it, and with ten other members, made a publication in one of the city papers. In this piece there were many opprobrious epithets, which I learned from more than one of the members were meant for me. Perceiving that the object was to provoke a newspaper controversy between Dr. Smith and myself, for the purpose of injuring the school, I took no other notice of the attack, than to write a private letter to that gentleman, and assure him that I had written nothing against the association, nor even known the names of those who did write, until they were made public; and that if I had been disposed to do so, I should have refrained in consequence of his connexion with it. From this letter Dr. Smith immediately made a mutilated extract, and garnishing it with a variety of vulgar and abusive expressions, had it inserted in connexion with my name in one of the papers, and at the same time replied to me in a private note equally remarkable for its obscurity and prevarication. Having resolved that this stratagem to destroy the school should fail of success, I took no notice of either.

3. I have spoken of a memorial of mine to the Medical Convention, in the month of June of last year. By the Convention it was referred to a committee of three members, of which Dr. Smith a member of that body was one, with instructions to draft a petition to the General Assembly in favour of endowing the Medical College. Dr. Smith's colleagues desired him to frame the petition, as being best acquainted with the wants of the College; this he undertook to do, and then *purposely omitted it*. Had such a memorial, expressing the sentiments of the Convention relative to the Medical College been presented to the Legislature, it might have moved that honourable body to measures that would have rendered the institution permanent with its *existing professors and officers*, and the Doctor therefore withheld it.

To give a full length portrait of this *gentleman* would be a labour similar to that of dragon-making in the Romances of the 16th century. It would be to combine all that is cunning and contemptible in the moral world. As it relates to the intrigues in the Medical College, he was like his household idol, *Cash*, the "root of all evil," like a general infection of the body every where present, corrupt and corrupting. I shall for a moment dismiss him from exclusive consideration, and call the attention of the reader to

*Doctor Bohrer.*

Of this beautiful specimen of the *beau monde*, what can I say? Who can paint the camellion, or fix the characters of Proteus? He was constant in but two things—his pretended friendship for me, and his affection for my station in the school.

Before he returned home last spring, he very justly reprobated Dr. Smith's Medical Association, and the motives in which it originated ; but several members assert that he gave a pledge to join it on his return. Previously to his arrival, however, it had fallen into discredit : He approved of the union of the College with the Hospital ; but with ineffable ease afterwards condemned it as preposterous : He had stated to me early in November last, that Dr. Smith was indulging himself in gloomy predictions concerning our school, and expressed the opinion, that such unseasonable forebodings clearly indicated a desire for its failure ; but in less than two months he endeavoured to *demonstrate* to me in repeated conversations, that we could not make it succeed : He had perceived and acknowledged poor Mr. Slack's incompetence, and to employ a legislative phrase, was anxious that he should be *amended by way of rider* ; he had decidedly approved of Mr. Best for this purpose ; but with inimitable facility turned against the arrangement.

These changes were produced by his acquiring the faculty of second sight ; which enabled him to perceive, that if I could be got *fairly* off, he might succeed to my practice, to my professorship, and to the presidency of the institution.

Having acquired this new sense, he fell to longing for the objects which it disclosed. He was not slow in devising means for their attainment, and began by complaining of bad prospects both for himself and the institution. To improve these, I redoubled my exertions to introduce him into practice. This encouraged him to persevere ; and as he who will not help himself shall have help from no body, he undertook to aid my friend-

ly efforts, by artfully labouring to supersede me in the confidence of my patients. Of this I was at that time ignorant, and continued so for many weeks. Meanwhile the united clamours of Dr. Smith and himself induced our new colleague, Dr. Godman to believe, what they pretended to think, that the school could not succeed; and not suspecting any insincerity, I formed the determination to abandon the project when *they should do so*, and remove from Cincinnati. This was the effect which Smith and Bohrer intended to produce; but before the end of the session they had imparted to *me* enough of second sight, to perceive their design, and I resolved to remain stedfast and let them drift along.

Finding at length that I would not resign, and having exhausted upon me a variety of black arts, among which was the *ostracism*, expulsion seemed to be the only resource. This however was a critical resort. To expel the founder of the institution, without any plausible pretext, and in the midst of his repeated calls for a specific statement of charges, might ruin themselves, unless the public mind could be reconciled to it. To produce this acquiescence, every mouth which could be brought into requisition, was to reiterate the solemn and hypocritical insinuations of Dr. Smith—that the school did not need patronage nor power, nor endowment—but a new organization, harmony and mutual cooperation among the professors—to be divested of turbulent, selfish and unpopular members—in other words, however painful it might be to utter it, to be rid of a certain prominent individual. Dr. Bohrer was to cooperate in this object as far as could be done without risking the imputation of being my enemy; which would defeat another object, in some respects still more important—this was to hoodwink



and silence my personal friends, for which he supposed his *tact* and ethics peculiarly to qualify him. To this end he devoted himself with the display and patience of a courtier, until most of *them* acquiring the power of *second sight*, were able, through a veil of flimsy trappings, to perceive designs of which they disapproved. The time at length arrived for *him* to resign, for I could not be expelled from the institution while he was in it, without his vote; and if he should give this, he could not with decency accept my place. Accordingly on the 7th of March, in the forenoon, I received his resignation, and at night his colleagues, Drs. Smith and Slack, expelled me from the institution. The deed was now done, and might produce to him one of two advantages:—If it should drive me from Cincinnati, he could remove hither and enjoy my place and practice; if it should not, his new honors would re-astonish his eastern friends, and prove that his residence in the backwoods had not been unproductive. I shall leave him in the quiet enjoyment of these well-earned laurels, and finish the gallery of portraits with a profile of

*Mr. Slack.*

Before this gentleman began to deliver lectures in the Medical School, he voluntarily remarked to me, that his first obligations were to the Cincinnati College, of which he was President and professor; and that he should be obliged to resign his place in the medical institution, whenever it might interfere with his other duties. In a subsequent conversation he made the same observation; and added, that whenever I should think and suggest, that a medical man, or one who could give an undivided attention to the professorship ought to be placed in it, he



would cheerfully resign. The whole of this I repeated in a meeting of the Faculty of the College on the 2d of March last, and it was recollected by him. In consequence of this timely warning, I began to think at an early period of an assistant, who might ultimately become his successor. A citizen of Cincinnati, under such circumstances, could not fail to turn his eye towards Mr. Best, the Curator of the Western Museum. Knowing from long acquaintance, that this gentleman possessed an extraordinary aptitude for scientific attainment, united with uncommon skill in the construction of chemical apparatus; and great ingenuity in the manipulations of the science, as far as he had practiced them, I apprized him of Mr. Slack's statements, and said to him, that if he would turn his attention more extensively to the study and practice of chemistry, I would vote for his being appointed Mr. Slack's assistant. A repetition of my conversations overcame his scruples as to his abilities, and he resolved on the course that I had proposed. During the first session, in conformity with the vote of the Faculty *including in its favour Mr. Slack himself*, Mr. Best assisted him, and performed his part with such alarming success, that in the ensuing spring he refused to have him another session. Soon afterwards, finding that unless he resigned the Presidency of Cincinnati College, the trustees of that institution would probably supersede him, he tendered his resignation, and then gave me to understand that he should devote himself exclusively to his professorships in the two colleges. This fact I communicated to Mr. Best, with the remark that I saw no prospect of his being introduced into the medical school, and he immediately resolved, as a substitute, on delivering a course of popular lectures in the Museum.

Preparations were accordingly made, and in autumn he commenced with a class of 50 gentlemen and ladies. About this time he informed Mr. Slack, that both he and I had given up all expectations of his coming into the medical school. In the month of *January* I gave that gentleman a formal assurance of the same kind; and at the Faculty meeting of Saturday the 2d of March, I repeated these declarations, with all possible emphasis; and successfully controverted some complaints which I succeeded in drawing from him relative to the same subject. On this occasion, in conjunction with the other members of the meeting, he declared himself satisfied, and after our adjournment, asked for a private interview, and repeated an expression of the gratification he felt at the result of our conference. On the following Tuesday he made the same declarations to one of my friends, and on the evening of that day, upon my telling him, that I understood I would be dismissed if I did not resign, he assured me in the most solemn manner that I was misinformed, and that no such measure was intended or would take place. Two nights afterwards, however, he seconded the motion and voted for my expulsion.

It is not possible that he should have considered this measure necessary, to protect himself against the superior pretensions of Mr. Best, for his claims had been formally withdrawn. He saw that Doctors Smith and Bohrer had combined against me, and being a sufficient mathematician to calculate that two are more than one; so good a politician as to think it best in turbulent times to be in the keeping of the stronger party; and so deeply versed in the science of law as to know that expelled members have no retaliating votes, he sold himself to their purposes—not for thirty pieces of silver—but for

their protection. How far the poor man is likely to experience this, will appear from the fact that ten days before my expulsion, in the very heat of their combination, when every breath which they exhaled reiterated against me the charge of hostility to Mr. Slack, and partiality for Mr. Best, Dr. Smith called upon Mr. Best, and informed him, that after I should cease to be a member of the school, it would be re-organized, *that the chemical chair, held by Mr. Slack, would be* WEAK, *and wished to know if he would consent to join Mr. Slack as assistant. That gentleman, added he, has* NOT *been consulted, and will probably object, but if you are willing, it* MUST *be done."* Mr. Best would not consent.

I have the written proofs of this fact now before me; and shall leave the reader to contrast the heartless cunning of one with the stupid credulity of the other; and to moralize on the folly, when in the dark, of seeking the protection of bad men, to save ourselves from the *imaginary* danger of seeing spirits.

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## VII. CONCLUSION.

HAVING given an historical sketch of the rise and progress of the Medical College of Ohio, and furnished data for an estimate of its present condition and prospects, I might conclude my narrative; but not *expecting* again to address the public on the subject, I propose to trespass on their patience a few moments longer.

The time and reputation of a professional man are his capital. In Cincinnati I have wasted the former, and jeopardized the latter: To indulge in unavailing regret for time that is "gone with the years beyond the flood," would be exhausting that which remains; but character when involved may be extricated, and I write with a reference to this object. Three charges have been often made against me, to which I propose to respond.

1. That among my medical brethren I am quarrelsome.

2. That I cultivate other branches of science than my profession.

3. That I am ambitious.

I will consider them separately.

1. The whole of my public controversies with any of the medical men, of this or any other place, have been since the year 1818; the time when I formed and expressed the design of instituting a medical school; and they have all grown directly or indirectly out of that design. From that date, in ambush or open day, they have waged upon me a predatory war; and when I have *defended* either the project or myself, they have with one voice exclaimed—*What an awful quarrelsome man! How dreadful broilsome he is! No soul can live in harmonious concord with him! But for him we should be, as one might say, a body of brethren! We have tried by every art not to irritate him, until we are really discouraged, and cannot do any thing more! He is so pugnacious, that he contends with a dozen of us at once; and until society will frown him into due submissiveness, or what would suit our interests better, drive him into banishment, they cannot expect to enjoy the sweets of peaceful tranquility!*

To this effect have been the pacific and pathetic vociferations of my humble aggressors, whenever I was driven into resistance, and happened to make reprisals upon them; and by such appeals they have expected to perform what there was no hope of accomplishing in any other way. Like certain heroes of the *Dunciad*, they have had great faith in the power of *noise*; and it must be allowed, that of all the torrents that can be formed in society against an individual, not one is more difficult to stem than a *clamour*. Whether that which they have laboured to raise, can be made strong enough to sweep me away, time only can determine.

2. That I have cultivated other branches of science than my profession.

I should feel proud to plead guilty to this charge without qualification. It is true that I believe in common with many other physicians, that the science of medicine consists of something more than a collection of *infallible receipts*; that it is indeed a wide spreading branch of the great stock of human knowledge; and that in pursuing its ramifications we are often drawn into a temporary study of the objects with which they are entwined—I have moreover perceived, that our country abounds in the unopened and ample stores of nature's productions, and have delivered an elementary course of lectures on Botany, and another on Mineralogy, with the sole view of inspiring my young countrymen with a taste for those sciences; but even when thus employed—while held in transient captivity within their magic circles—I have never forgotten that they are but the auxiliary organs of the profession, and entitled only to the homage of a secondary devotion. The scientific world would be amused to learn, that such a charge has been brought against a

man, who has contributed little more to their journals, than his accusers, who have contributed nothing.

I shall dismiss this allegation, and proceed to the last.  
3. That I am ambitious.

The objects of my ambition have been a Public Library—a School of Literature and the Arts for the promotion of useful knowledge—a Lancaster-Seminary, with a superadded Grammar School, and a College for classical education, supervening upon this—a Museum, in which lectures on the curious productions of nature and art might be delivered—a Medical College—a Public Hospital and a Lunatic Asylum for the state. All of these have been originated within the last 10 years; and in each of them I have had the honor, with a little band of ardent and munificent spirits to be a labourer. The difficulties we have had to encounter, have been neither few nor feeble. As old ones have been vanquished new ones have appeared; and, to borrow a metaphor, like the traveller ascending the Alps, we have only surmounted one, to be presented with the rugged front of another.

Circumstances have too often placed me in the van of this little *corps* of patriots; and involved me in the collisions, which occur between these who solicit for public institutions, and those who refuse to give, or give with reluctance. He who resists importunity, must in self-defence, condemn either the applicant or the object as unworthy: Some of my fellow citizens have occasionally done both, denouncing me as ambitious, and the ends for which I laboured, as undeserving of encouragement, because they chose to *stigmatize* them as objects of ambition. That I was ambitious of being the humble means of naturalizing the sciences in this new country, I acknowledge, without the dread of imputed vanity or the apprehension of censure.



To effect this, I was willing to forego the pursuit of loftier objects, and refrain from entering the ranks of those who press forward to the prize of glory, awarded to such as augment the treasures of human knowledge by new discoveries. I was disposed, indeed, to commute the labours of the philosopher for those of the patriot; and instead of attempting to extend the boundaries of science, to cultivate the genius so liberally bestowed on the youth of a country, whose want of literary institutions I have so much reason personally to deplore.

I was especially desirous of seeing a liberal and permanent medical school established in Cincinnati; the town of all others in the western country which has the greatest number of natural advantages for such an institution. This object, I supposed, might sanctify ambition itself; and being rigidly within the limits of my profession, I expected it to silence the clamours of the most scrupulous. No calculation was ever more fallacious, for no project could have awakened the jealousy of so many. The alarm bells were chimed in louder peals; and the cabalistic phrase "inordinate ambition," with new accompaniments, echoed through the whole community. The majority, it is true, saw no approaching harm, but they only wanted a pretext to remain passive, and the clamour furnished this. The enlightened and the patriotic had already exhausted their means upon preceding institutions, and were not able to afford the assistance which their judgment dictated as necessary; and their feelings suggested as due to the undertaking.

Meanwhile, as already intimated, the rival school at Lexington (in which I had declined the most pressing invitations to unite) was sustained not only by funds derived from the citizens, from the treasury of the town, and from that of the state, all of which were wanting

here; but by a firm and united expression of approbation for the institution and the professors.

To fail under such a combination of sinister circumstances, could mortify none but a man of the sickliest self-abasement; to succeed might have gratified a nobler ambition than I am conscious of possessing, or dare to claim.

The labours at this place will not, however, be ultimately unproductive. In the cycle of changes an auspicious hour will sooner or later arrive, when the Medical College, and any of our other institutions which appear to be now prostrate, may be revived and made to shed upon society the fruits, which, in a flourishing condition, they cannot fail to produce. But before this can take place, the community must become more united; their countenance must be withdrawn from those who, out of selfish motives, array themselves in opposition; the labour and the contribution must not be exacted from a few; nor must it be a reproach to those who dedicate themselves to this service, that they are ambitious. To effect this propitious condition, nothing could contribute so powerfully as the *institutions themselves*. We recur therefore to the observation, that no effort to form a literary establishment in a new country is entirely lost, for it renders the subsequent more successful;—as the ruins of the first bridge over a deep and rapid stream become a foundation for the second, which can thereby be made permanent. With a few others, I have been engaged in labours similar to those of the backwoodsman, whose arduous task it is to subdue the forest and the wild beasts that infest it; and although it cannot be said that our ends have been attained, it is certain that something has been accomplished, and that perseverance may achieve the enterprize.

## APPENDIX.

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THE following Correspondence will show, that a month before the extraordinary session of the legislature, for which the preceding pamphlet is chiefly designed, the party implicated had a full and formal notice, that a representation of their misdoings would be made to that honorable body.

*Cincinnati, April 22d, 1822.*

SIR,

I take this method of informing you, that I am engaged in preparing for the press a narrative of the transactions in the Medical College of Ohio for the last year; and that it will appear about the 10th of next month. I would publish it at an earlier period, that you might have an opportunity of replying to it before the meeting of the General Assembly in May, but that the statements which I must necessarily give, relative to your participation in those events, might injure the Cincinnati College, were they made before the commencement of the approaching session in that institution. By giving you this notice of my design, you will have time to collect facts and documents to lay before the legislature; and therefore should that honorable body not sustain yourself and Dr. Smith in the course you have lately taken, you cannot complain that I have employed any unfair or unexpected means of influencing them against you.

Your obedient servant,

DAN'L. DRAKE.

REV'D. ELIJAH SLACK, }  
Professor M. C. of Ohio. }

*Cincinnati April 24th 1822*

SIR

I received a letter from you on monday, in which you express your determination of publishing "a narrative of the transactions of the Medical college of Ohio for the last year"

you also intimate that certain charges will be exhibited against me—which will go to injure the Cincinnati college; & your regard for the interests of that institution—has induced you to defer the publication till the college session shall have commenced—

How far, Sir, you are influenced favourably to the college, let the public judge—

In regard to the charges I must distinctly inform you, If they be worthy of consideration—I am ready—provided time be allowed to meet & fully refute them—

But as you have not specified in the communication before me—the charges alluded to in the words "participation in those events"—It is impossible at this late period to collect the documents & refute, before the meeting of the Legislature—such as may be found in your publication of the 10th of May—this you yourself admit—Indeed should the charges be immediately presented—you have not left me a sufficient time before the meeting of Assembly, for their refutation as my former colleagues and others with whom I must communicate are at a distance—

I remain your obedient Servant

ELIJAH SLACK

DR DANIEL DRAKE

[Printed from the original.]

ERRATA.

Page 11, for '*nemo contradiscente*,' read *nemo contradicente*.

Page 12, for '*as the Society might prescribe*,' read *as society might prescribe*.









